

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA  
CHARLESTON

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 2:19-cv-00347

THE SUM OF \$9,139.00 IN UNITED STATES CURRENCY

Defendant.

VERIFIED COMPLAINT OF FORFEITURE

Comes now, the United States of America ("Plaintiff"), by and through its attorneys, Michael B. Stuart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of West Virginia, and Christopher R. Arthur, Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of West Virginia, and respectfully brings this Verified Complaint and alleges as follows in accordance with Rule G of the Supplemental Rules for Admiralty or Maritime Claims and Asset Forfeiture Actions:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This is a civil action in rem brought on behalf of the United States of America, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 983(a), to

enforce the provisions of 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6), for the forfeiture of a certain sum of currency constituting proceeds of, or which was used or intended to be used in any manner or part to commit or to facilitate the commission of one or more violations of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. §§ 801 et seq.

**THE DEFENDANT IN REM AND POTENTIAL INTERESTED PARTIES**

2. The defendant property consists of \$9,139.00, more or less, in United States Currency. The above item was seized on or about September 27, 2018, from the possession of Stephanie Lawhorn ("Lawhorn") in Lawhorn's 2003 Dodge Durango, VIN #1D4HS38N03467, when Lawhorn was pulled over for a traffic violation in Belle, West Virginia 25015.

3. The defendant currency is being forfeited under 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6) in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841.

4. The above-described seized currency is in the custody of the Belle Police Department in Belle, West Virginia.

**JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

5. Plaintiff brings this action in rem in its own right to forfeit and condemn the defendant currency. This Court has jurisdiction over an action commenced by the United States under 28 U.S.C. § 1345, and over an action for forfeiture under 28 U.S.C. § 1355(a).

6. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1355(b)(1)(A), because the acts or omissions giving rise to the forfeiture occurred in this district.

7. Upon the filing of this verified complaint, the plaintiff requests that the Clerk of this Court issue an arrest warrant in rem pursuant to Supplemental Rule G(3)(b)(i), which the plaintiff will execute upon the seized currency in the custody of the United States Marshal Service, pursuant to Supplemental Rule G(3)(c).

**FACTS**

8. On September 27, 2018, law enforcement observed Lawhorn weaving in and out of her lane, and also crossing the right fog line.

9. Lawhorn admitted she was driving without a valid license, and she further admitted that she smoked marijuana

approximately 2 hours before the stop. Law enforcement detected the smell of marijuana coming from inside the car.

10. Law enforcement contacted the K-9 unit, and the K-9 detected illegal substances inside the car.

11. Law enforcement searched the vehicle and recovered the following:

(a) approximately 14.998 grams of fentanyl, a schedule II controlled substance;

(b) approximately 121 grams of methamphetamine, a schedule II controlled substance; and

(c) approximately 53.13 grams of marijuana, a schedule I controlled substance.

16. Upon information and belief, Lawhorn had been selling illegal drugs for a number of years.

17. Upon information and belief, Lawhorn has no other sources of income, except selling illegal substances like fentanyl, methamphetamine, and marijuana.

18. For the foregoing reasons, the defendant currency is forfeitable to the United States, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6), because it constitutes proceeds of the illegal sale of controlled substances, specifically methamphetamine, a Schedule II controlled substance.

WHEREFORE, the United States prays that process of warrant in rem issue for the arrest of the defendant currency; that due notice be given to all parties to appear and show cause why the forfeiture should not be decreed; that judgment be entered declaring the defendant currency be forfeited to the United States for disposition according to law; and that the United States be granted such other relief as this Court may deem just and proper, together with the costs and disbursements of this action.

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL B. STUART  
United States Attorney

By: /s/Christopher R. Arthur  
CHRISTOPHER R. ARTHUR  
Assistant United States Attorney  
WV State Bar No. 9192  
300 Virginia Street, East  
Room 4000  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Telephone: 304-345-2200



VERIFICATION

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

COUNTY OF KANAWHA, TO-WIT:

I, L.W. Holeston, a patrolman with the Belle Police Department, declare under penalty of perjury as provided by 28 U.S.C. § 1746, the following:

That the foregoing Complaint for Forfeiture in rem is based upon reports and information I personally have prepared or gathered and which have been provided to me by various law enforcement personnel, and that everything contained therein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, except where stated to be upon information and belief, in which case I believe it to be true.

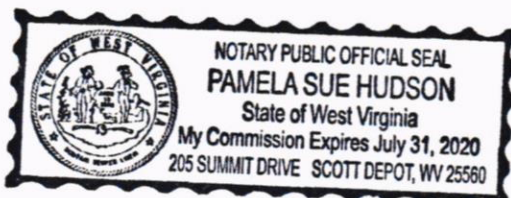
Executed on April 30, 2019.

  
L.W. HOLESTON

Taken, subscribed and sworn to before me this 30<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2019.

  
Notary Public

My commission expires on July 31, 2020.



## CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

**I. (a) PLAINTIFFS**

United States of America

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff \_\_\_\_\_  
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

**DEFENDANTS**

The sum of \$9,139.00 in United States Currency

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Kanawha  
(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF  
THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

**II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☒ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff  
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant  
☐ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)  
☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

**III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES** (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- |   | PTF                        | DEF                        |   | PTF                        | DEF                        |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Citizen of This State                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State     | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Citizen of Another State                | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

**IV. NATURE OF SUIT** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)Click here for: [Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.](#)

CONTRACT	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise	<b>PERSONAL INJURY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice <b>PERSONAL INJURY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability <b>PERSONAL PROPERTY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other <b>LABOR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Management Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act <b>IMMIGRATION</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application <input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 <b>PROPERTY RIGHTS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark <b>SOCIAL SECURITY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g)) <b>FEDERAL TAX SUITS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	<input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act <input type="checkbox"/> 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) <input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment <input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking <input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation <input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit <input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV <input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions <input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts <input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters <input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act <input type="checkbox"/> 896 Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision <input type="checkbox"/> 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
<b>REAL PROPERTY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property	<b>CIVIL RIGHTS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/Accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education <b>PRISONER PETITIONS</b> <b>Habeas Corpus:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 463 Alien Detainee <input type="checkbox"/> 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> 530 General <input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty <b>Other:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other <input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition <input type="checkbox"/> 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement			

**V. ORIGIN** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☒ 1 Original Proceeding  
☐ 2 Removed from State Court  
☐ 3 Remanded from Appellate Court  
☐ 4 Reinstated or Reopened  
☐ 5 Transferred from Another District (specify)  
☐ 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer  
☐ 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

**VI. CAUSE OF ACTION**

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):

21 U.S.C. 881(a)(6)

Brief description of cause:

Forfeiture or drug proceeds

**VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:**

☐ CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. DEMAND \$

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:

JURY DEMAND: ☐ Yes ☒ No**VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY**

(See instructions):

JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCKET NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

DATE

05/01/2019

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

/s/ Christopher R. Arthur

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

APPLYING IFP \_\_\_\_\_

JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_

MAG. JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_